

MEMORIAL

OR

DECORATION DAY

A POEM

*Lewis*

Founded on Facts.



# MEMORIAL

—OR—

## ≡≡≡ DECORATION DAY ≡≡≡

A POEM

≡≡≡ FOUNDED ON FACTS. ≡≡≡

PRESENTED WITH COMPLIMENTS.

To \_\_\_\_\_

By \_\_\_\_\_



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of Parkersburg  
W. Va

 PREFATORY. 

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The tale is an original one, founded on an incident of actual occurrence—a simple touching story, portraying good and charitable impulses acted out under circumstances where bitter prejudices and strong feelings would naturally tend to stifle them.

It is no apology for the Rebellion, nor any palliation of its enormities. The lesson it teaches is that bitter animosities however well founded ought, so far as they relate to individuals, to terminate at the grave.

“When cold in the grave lies the friend thou hast loved,  
Be his faults and his follies forgot by thee then,

But if from their slumber the vail be removed,  
Weep o'er them in silence and close it again.”







A POEM.

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'T WAS balmy morning in the month of May,  
The golden sun-light gleamed o'er hill and dale  
And kissed the sparkling dew-drops as they lay  
Profusely sprinkled on the flowery vale—  
Till one by one they hid their glittering eyes—  
Bade earth adieu, and vanished to the skies,  
Thus dawned the morning in the month of May,  
Thus nature welcomed "Decoration Day."







G RIM war had ceased, its ghastly wounds were healed,  
Its banners furled—and mighty armies fled,  
But here and there its relics were revealed  
In shattered walls and cities of the dead;  
And mourning ones that wandered to and fro  
In vestments dark and countenance of woe;  
These were the records Time had not effaced  
That ruthless war in fire and blood had traced.

Near yonder hill where grave-stones thickly stand  
Amid the grove that shields them from the eye  
Where runs the silvery brooklet o'er the sand  
With ceaseless murmur as it passes by—  
Where earliest flowerets greet the coming Spring  
And parting day-light last is lingering  
Rest Patriot martyrs neath the hallowed sod  
Who gave their lives to Liberty and God.



THITHER the sad procession wends its way,  
Widows and orphans mingling in the train  
While tattered banners, battle-scared betray  
How brothers hate when war's fierce passions reign.  
Oh may such hatred never more return  
But in its stead may Love's pure incense burn  
May sweet Forgiveness like the flowers ye bring  
Yield perfume to the heart, and cause perennial Spring

Though vast this City of the fallen brave  
The living Friends with pious care bestow  
A floral offering upon every grave  
Moist with affections tears as if to show  
The risen Spirits fondly lingering near  
How cherished yet, their memory—and how dear  
The sacred spot where rests the earthly form  
Securely now from battle's raging storm.



❄️

EACH grave was decked with wreaths of buds and flowers,  
The fittest tribute to the honored dead—  
To those who battled for these homes of ours  
And precious blood on Freedom's altar shed.  
One mound there was remote from all the rest  
No pathway toward it, by no hand carressed  
None cared for this—and none a tribute gave,  
All turned away—for 'twas a "Rebel's Grave."

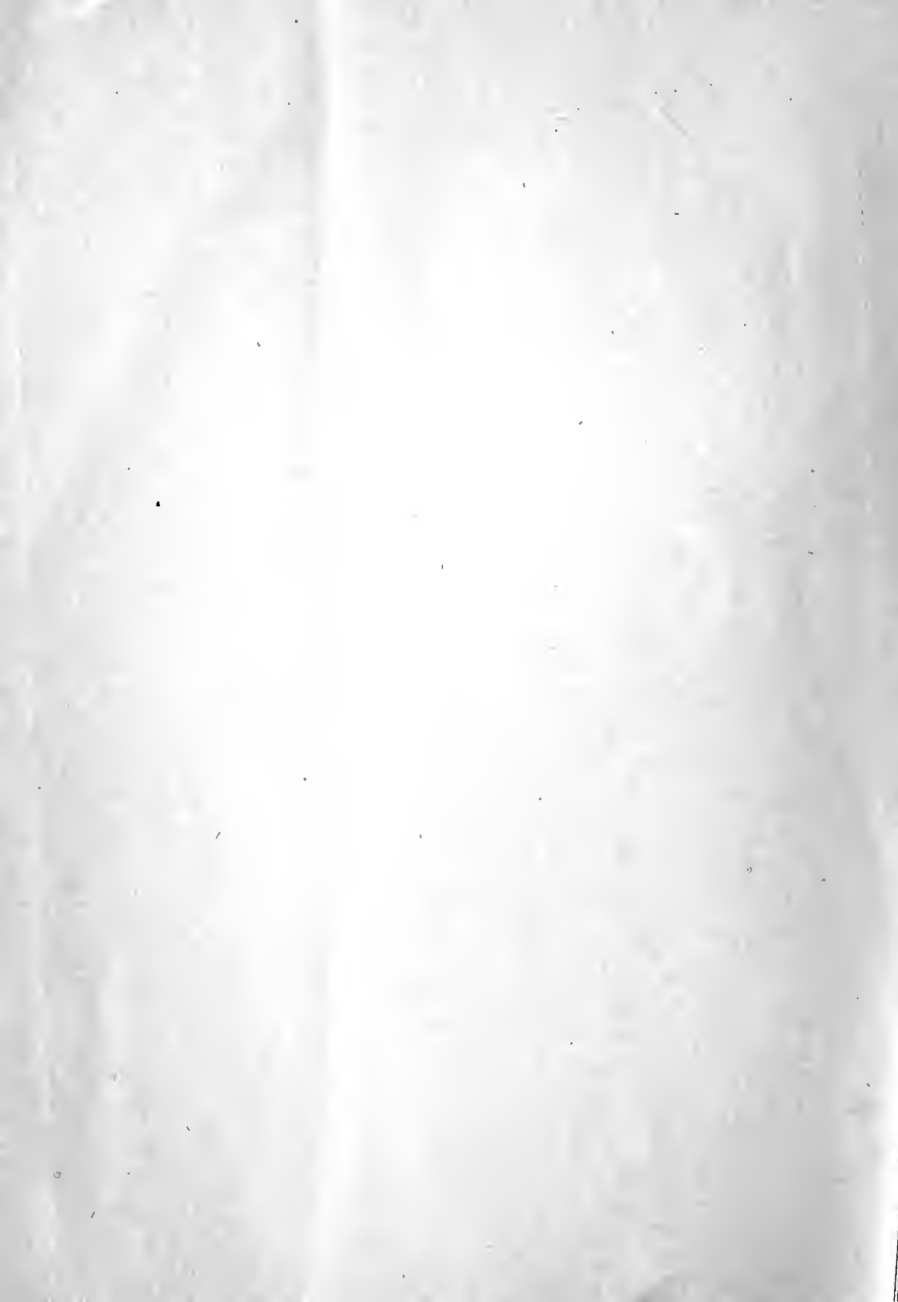
Amid the throng a little girl was seen  
Wending her footsteps towards the lonely mound  
The grass upon it, was as fresh and green  
As that which grew on consecrated ground  
"Tis true" she said "that others seem to scorn  
This one lone grave so friendless and forlorn  
But I will go and strew with little flowers  
What God baptised with sunshine and with showers.

❄️



THE tender tribute which pure childhood gave  
Called forth rebuke from some who stood anear  
“Why scatter roses on a Rebel’s Grave  
Twas not for this, that we assembled here.”  
The girl looked up in innocent surprise  
Through tear-drops gathering in her hazel eyes  
At length in faltering accents she replied  
To those who would her noble motives chide:

“My own dear Father was a soldier too,  
Far in the Sunny South he marched away  
With friends and comrades dressed in Union Blue  
To meet the Rebel enemy in Gray.  
He kissed his darling—told me not to cry,  
“When will you come,” I said, he answered “by and by”  
But O he’ll never Come! for he was slain  
And now lies buried on the battle plain.





PERHAPS some little southern girl will go  
And deck poor Papa's grave with Sunny flowers  
And oh! how happy I would be to know  
That it was cared for as we care for ours  
And if she should—I could not love the one  
Who blamed her for so kind an action done,  
Hard is the heart and cruel, that denies  
A single flower where buried Papa lies."

"And who can tell but in that distant land  
Some little orphan girl like me, has cried  
Because no Father takes her by the hand  
And now she knows not when nor where he died  
It may be true, that in this very spot,  
Neglected here avoided and forgot  
The father of my unknown sister lies  
For whom she nightly prays, and grieves, and cries.



W HILE gazing here I heard an Angel say  
    "On yon lone mound, thy prettiest roses strew,  
Then on thy Father's Grave—so far away  
    I'll cause some hand to do the same for you."  
    "Sweet Angel voice—I hastened to obey  
My heart was happy and I could not stay—  
Dear Orphan friend whom God to me has given  
    I'll love and clasp her when we meet in Heaven."

The simple story of the orphan child  
    Moved many hearts to tenderness and tears  
The Angel-impulse they at first reviled  
    All see anew—and every heart reveres.  
These holy accents uttered by the tongue  
    Of one so stricken—beautiful and young  
Seemed a new law of Charity and Love,  
    Revealed all pure from brighter realms above.



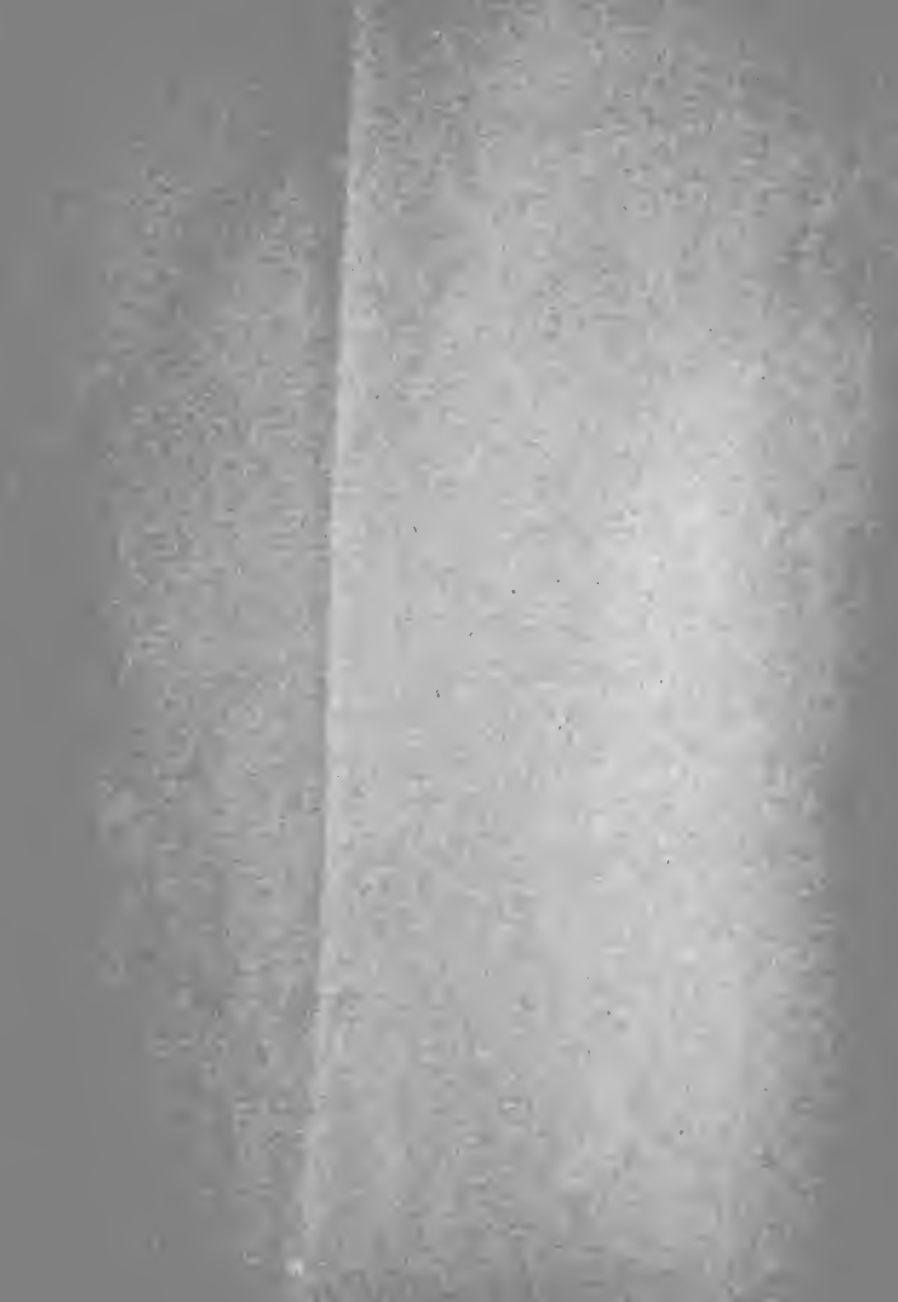
SUCCESSING seasons came and passed away—

The annual offerings to the dead were made;  
At each return of Decoration Day

Bright wreaths of flowers on *every* grave were laid,  
And none more fragrant beautiful and fair

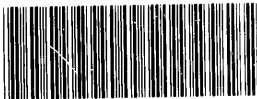
Than on the lonely mound were scattered there  
In tender mem'ry of the Orphan Child

Whose spirit gazed from Paradise and smiled.





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